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CONTENTS

November, 1947

Page

Salute to the Soviet Union
from D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P. ... 321

Notes of the Month: *Two Camps—One World*
by R. P. D. 323

Democratic Planning in the Soviet Union
by WAL. HANNINGTON ... 333

Cripps and the Alternative by J. R. CAMPBELL ... 337

Reshuffle to the Right by WILLIAM RUST 341

Sidney Webb by R. PALME DUTT 344

Document of the Month—

The Nine-Party Conference: Resolution and Declaration 347

Review—

J. V. Stalin. Sochineniya. Vol. I. 1901-7: *J. Winternitz* 349

A Hundred Years Ago—*Letter to Marx from Engels*... 352

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SALUTE TO THE SOVIET UNION

from

D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

SO your revolution started thirty years ago, Ivan Ivanovitch! You have been building and re-building for just half my lifetime.

What have you done in that little span of years, less than a generation? Quite a lot, I think.

You have transferred Socialism from the drawing-board to reality. Lincoln Steffens told us when you were just starting, "I have seen the future, and it works!" Now we see it daily and know that it works and grows.

What have you done in the course of your building? You have raised the standards of living in what was a terribly backward country to a secure level from which it can advance to unprecedented heights. You have made the most primitive agricultural system into the most advanced. You have created a powerful well-balanced industrial-agricultural world out of Tsarist chaos and misery. You have built a system under which every scientific or industrial development is an unlimited blessing instead of a misery and a curse. You have raised your Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to be the second greatest power in the world in terms of mere material strength; that you cannot fail to make it the greatest of all is one of the reasons why hysterical politicians and journalists in the Western world dislike you so. And you have done all this whilst terribly handicapped firstly by having to devote infinite

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labour and resources to preparing for a defensive war, and secondly—and far more seriously—by having to fight a terrible war on your own territories for nearly four years, almost alone.

But you have done greater things for mankind than the building of your material strength. You have ended the exploitation of man by man, the domination of owners of land and money and factories and resources, the curse of unemployment, the inequality of women, and the inferiority and unjust treatment of national minorities, including Jews. You have made yourself and your fellow men and women truly free; you have opened to yourselves education and culture and leisure. You have made yourself and your brothers and sisters the founders of a new and splendid civilisation; you stand on the threshold of unpredictable wealth and glory and development.

No wonder that those who prosper by owning and controlling the old machinery of capitalism hate you, Ivan Ivanovitch. No wonder every capitalist sheet in the U.S.A. and Great Britain and scores elsewhere, lie until they are black in the type-face in the vain effort to pretend that we can't see your glorious success, that it isn't there, that you are at once a weak and miserable failure and an aggressive and powerful war-monger. They think—poor miserable liars—that they can succeed in making the world your enemy, and in bringing you to destruction, by the methods Hitler and Goebbels used, without success! They think they can do better than those, their prototypes, even after Fascism has been brought to military disaster.

They will fail, too. The workers of the world are your friends, as you are theirs. We salute you. We congratulate you. We respect and admire you. And we mean to show you that we, too, can build a new world. In socialist emulation, we shall try to do it even better than you have done.

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Two Camps—One World

At present Moscow is not only the inspirer of the building of the new Soviet democracy. . . Moscow is at the same time the banner of struggle of all the toiling people in the world, of all the oppressed races and nations in their struggle for liberation from the rule of plutocracy and imperialism.

STALIN on the 800th Anniversary of Moscow, Sept., 1947.

THIRTY years have passed since the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia opened a new era in human history. The Ten Days that Shook the World have become Thirty Years that Changed the World—and the change is still speeding forward with extending sweep and momentum. These thirty years of world crisis have seen the advancing strength of socialism, of national liberation, of popular awakening and organisation in every continent, and the weakening of the old order of capitalism and imperialism. The struggle is not ended; the fury of the representatives of the old order, now entrenched in their final stronghold of the United States, mounts to new heights of desperate aggression, as they sense the approaching end of their dominion; capitalist monopoly, now concentrated with two-thirds of its productive power in the United States, still dreams to conquer the world. But the shift in the balance of world strength is inescapable. 1947 is a long track from 1917.

After Thirty Years

Lessons of thirty years are not easily learned by the Bourbons of the old order. This is typified in the symbolic example of Churchill who covers the entire span from the colossal and costly fiasco of his wars of intervention in the beginning of the period to the still more grandiose fiasco he is now engaged in preparing with his Fulton crusade, evidently having taken to heart from his nursery days the old adage, "Try, try, try again." Throughout these thirty years wave after wave of reaction has sought to turn back the tide of liberation in vain; every partial and local success has turned to final failure. The wars of intervention ended in fiasco. The world offensive of fascism brought untold horrors, from which we are still suffering today, but ended in final fiasco; the criminals ended on the gibbet by the verdict of the world. Where the Denikins and Kolchaks, the Churchills and Horthys failed a generation ago; where the Hitlers and Mussolinis and Hirohitos failed within recent memory; today the Trumans and Marshals and Vandenbergs, the Churchills and De Gaulles and Bevins can scarcely have sanguine hopes of success. The path is too well trodden; the end too familiar.

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" And The World Is Marching On "

The contours of the world have changed. The old order in Europe is mortally stricken and desperately clamours for renewed injections of dollars to maintain its existence; new democracies have come to birth, which have proved their vitality and stability to bring new life in the desolation left by fascism; Asia is awakened and pressing forward from the Arab Middle East to Democratic China and the South East Pacific, despite the dollar-subsidised aggression of Chiang Kai Shek, the Anglo-American equipped armies of Holland, or the bleeding sores of partition in India. The Soviet Union, no longer the young republic of a generation ago which had to fight for its life against a host of enemies at home and abroad, and whose early demise was so confidently predicted by all the political wiseacres, stands today as one of the two decisive World Powers; the Socialist World Power; not only the first free and classless society, which has solved the economic and social problems of the modern era; but the World Power which can alone with complete independence and equality face the threats and provocations of the American Colossus; the Power which led the struggle for peace in the years between the wars, which dealt the main blows to destroy the monster of fascism and save the world from slavery, and which today stands in the forefront of a great array of democratic peoples who are determined not to submit to new aggression and domination or to the manœuvres for a new war.

The New Offensive

The thirtieth anniversary of the Soviet Union takes place in the midst of grave international tension. It would be folly to underestimate the dangers of the new offensive of aggression and reaction which is being led at present by the United States, and which is intensified by the deepening economic difficulties and contradictions of the capitalist world. In the third year after victory over fascism there is not yet stable peace; the treaties with Germany and Japan have still to be drawn up; there are still local wars of democracy against reactionary dictatorship in Greece, Indochina, Indonesia and China. The wartime unity of the Powers which defeated fascism is becoming replaced by a new and dangerous alignment of growing antagonism; and the theory of " two worlds " is widely accepted by many Anglo-American spokesmen, with consequent plans for the division of Europe and the partition of Germany. At Lake Success a violent assault is launched by the United States and its satellites against the United Nations Charter, to undermine the key buttress devised by Roosevelt for the preservation of world peace, the principle of unanimity of the Powers, and thus replace the United Nations by an American-dominated military alliance. The aims to rebuild Western Germany and Japan as bastions of reaction in Europe and Asia are unconcealed. The protracted manœuvres over the Marshall Plan are taking advantage of the economic difficulties of Western Europe to entangle the

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sixteen nations which swallowed the bait, deeper and deeper into subordination to external control. The American official claims to penetration, domination and expansion, both economic and military, in every continent are increasingly outspoken, not only in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific, but in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The witches' chorus of calls to war rises to a crescendo from certain western quarters, as in the recent declarations of Byrnes, Churchill and De Gaulle. All the most critical decisions of the post-war era are now coming to a head.

Domestic Offensive

Nor is this offensive confined to the sphere of international relations. Its counterpart develops as an offensive against the working class and democracy in every country brought within the American orbit. In the United States the Taft-Hartley Labour Act to break the elementary rights of trade unionism is accompanied by a mass purge of the government services and a witch-hunt against all suspect of left opinions on a scale which leaves the Palmer hysteria after the last war a mere kindergarten rehearsal. In France and Italy the parties which won the first confidence of the electorate are driven from the Government in response to dollar pressure, and anti-Communist Governments dominated by the Right are installed, which openly declare that they depend on dollar aid to maintain their power.

> " There will not be a revolution *if we get help from America.*" (Count Sforza, Italian Foreign Minister, September 22, 1947).
>
> " He spoke of the need for strong Governments in Western countries to counter Communist sabotage; assurances, he said, had been received from the French leaders that *with American aid* the Communists could be kept from gaining an ascendancy." (Senator Bridges, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, speaking in Paris: *The Times*, October 18, 1947).

What began as Greece and Turkey is already France and Italy; the status of " client states " spreads fast.

In Britain the Government is reorganised to the Right; economic policy is subordinated to American pressure; nationalisation schemes are delayed; and a heavy offensive, in close association with the Federation of British Industries, is opened against the living standards of the people, while monopoly interests are protected, one third of the budget is devoted to crushing military expenditure for the reactionary foreign policy of the Anglo-American bloc, and fascist propaganda is accorded police protection, with jailing of anti-fascists guilty of crying " Down with Fascism." The illusions which sought to separate foreign policy from home policy are indeed shattered. In the single network of world relations today it is a single fight.

Two Worlds or One?

It is necessary to understand the causes of this deepening tension and worsening international situation, and what must be done to overcome them. Why, when the peoples of every country want peace, is

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there so much talk and threats of war from powerful Anglo-American spokesmen and their backers? Why, when the far more heavily war-devastated countries of Eastern Europe are making such a striking recovery, are the far less heavily war-devastated countries of Western Europe finding such difficulties in economic recovery? Is it inevitable, as the advocates of the " two worlds " theory in Britain, America and other Western countries urge, that communism and capitalism cannot exist together and co-operate in one world, and that victory over fascism must now be followed by a renewed world conflict, with formation of rival " power-blocs," American and Russian, leading eventually to new war? Is the theory of national independence and sovereignty, as these same advocates urge, now "out-of-date," and have Britain, France and other smaller countries no alternative save to be drawn into either an " American " or a " Russian " orbit, or, as another group suggest for an illusory alternative, to form a third " power-bloc " of " Western Europe " (which is in reality part of the official American plan)? These questions go to the heart of the present world situation. It is necessary to give a plain answer to these questions, and to show what must be done to end the present dangerous situation and safeguard the future of democracy, peace, and international co-operation.

Two Camps—One World

Such a plain answer and positive programme has been put forward by the Declaration of the Nine Communist Parties which met in Poland in September. This Declaration is of concern, not merely to Communists, but to all democrats and supporters of peace. The Declaration recognises frankly the dangers arising from the present American expansionist offensive and its backers in Britain, France and other countries. But it shows at the same time the positive programme to overcome these dangers and win the fight for peace and democratic and national freedom. It is true that the wartime unity which defeated fascism has given place to a new and growing conflict between two camps. But it is not a conflict between two geographical camps. It is not a conflict between two " power-blocs," American and Russian. It is not a conflict between " East " and " West." It is not a conflict between communism and liberal democracy. It is a conflict between the overwhelming masses of the people in all countries, not only in the countries where the common people have already won power, as in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, or are drawing close to power and are menaced by external intervention, as in France and Italy, but also in the countries where reactionary policy still holds sway, as in Britain and the United States, against a tiny handful of big monopolists, centred in the United States, with backers in Britain, France and other countries, including a section of the leadership of the labour movement, who are working to undo the results of the war and replace fascism by a new reactionary world domination. Accordingly the Declaration calls for the unity of all democrats, whether

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socialist, communist or non-socialist, as well as all supporters of national independence and peace, to defeat this reactionary offensive, not through war, but through the united strength of the democratic forces of the world.

Fact and Fiction

It is not surprising that this Declaration, which is likely to prove of governing importance for the lines of democratic development in the coming period, has aroused more discussion than any political declaration since the war. Together with Vishinsky's factual and unanswered indictment before the United Nations of the American expansionist offensive and war drive, this Declaration and coming together of nine European parties of unquestioned representative character has provided a powerful platform to rally world democratic unity against the new Munichism and the attempts to revive the Anti-Comintern Pact. It is also not surprising that this initiative has aroused frenzied hostility from those quarters which feel themselves touched and are participating in the new reactionary offensive. But it is significant that the hostile critics from these quarters and the commentators in the monopoly-owned press have apparently failed to read the Declaration and prefer to conjure up fantasies of their own to demolish. Favourite fantasy is the "revival of the Communist International." These critics, having themselves revived the campaign of the Anti-Comintern Pact, have evidently been missing the Comintern, and have accordingly searched the Declaration eagerly to find what is not there. Living in the past, they have failed to appreciate the new world situation in which the Communist Parties, as Thorez recently declared, act "each in its own country as the moving spirits of a policy of democratic and working class union which aims at the renaissance and independence of their respective nations, mutual understanding among the peoples of the world and peace."

Political Distortions

More important are the political distortions which coolly set out to the public the exact opposite of what is in the Declaration. The Declaration calls for world democratic unity against the imperialist warmakers who are trying to divide the world into two blocs. This, according to the French Socialist Party statement, "signifies that Russia has resigned herself to the division of the world into two blocs." The Declaration states that "it is essential for the anti-imperialist democratic camp to unite" and calls for unity of "all the democratic and patriotic forces of the people." This, according to the ingenious Mr. Bartlett (*News-Chronicle*, 7.10.47), means that "there can be no more United Fronts and Popular Fronts, with which Communists, Socialists and members of other left-wing parties had fought reaction in many countries since the civil war in Spain." Actually there is a very much wider extension of the United Front in many countries today than then; and the broad front against Munich and non-inter-

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vention (which included a very active fight against the Right Wing supporters of Munich and non-intervention) is carried to a very much broader base in the present-day fight against the new Munichism.

Fear of the Truth

The Declaration calls on the European peoples to unite to resist enslavement to American imperialism, and denounces " the imperialist anti-democratic camp " whose " leading force " is declared to be " the U.S.A." Mr. Morgan Phillips deftly " summarises " this by saying: " The Moscow announcement describes Western Europe as the ' imperialist anti-democratic camp ' " (*Daily Herald,* 10.10.47). Alike in the *Daily Herald* editorial and in the Labour Party Secretary's statement there is a curious inability even to mention the main theme of the Declaration, the expansionist offensive led by American imperialism and its menace to European countries. On this subject the voluble commentators suddenly lose their tongues. Instead, the fight against explicitly named Right Wing leaders who oppose working class unity and stand for surrender to American imperialism is described as " a war against European Socialism." Disunity in France, it is pointed out, may let in De Gaulle. Precisely: that is why it is necessary to oppose those leaders like Blum who are against unity. The Declaration calls on the Communist Parties to " stand courageously on guard for democracy, national sovereignty, freedom and independence of their countries." The perspicacious Mr. Cummings " interprets " this to mean that the Communist Parties are to act as " fifth columns " (the phrase originally coined to describe the pro-fascist gangs in Madrid acting on behalf of Franco and the German-Italian fascist invaders of Spain, and therefore most applicable today to the pro-American agents in European countries who are ready to sell their countries for dollars). If Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Cummings would study their own Gallup poll, which showed that 57 per cent. of the British people are convinced that American dollar aid will involve interference with British national independence, and that 51 per cent. of them are for rejection of aid on those terms, they would discover that the Nine-Parties Declaration is very much closer to the spirit of the British people than either of the Front Benches in parliament or even the editorial columns of the *News-Chronicle.*

Bogy, Bogy?

But perhaps there is no menace of American expansion, intervention and domination? Perhaps it is all a communist imagination? It may even be that these estimable Liberal gentlemen and Labour Ministers sincerely believe the tales that Goebbels used to tell them, that the real menace to British independence comes from the spread of the so-called " iron curtain " in Europe and the prospect of " Red Asiatic hordes " tramping down the streets of London. But these old records of the Anti-Comintern Pact are now second-hand and worn from use; even such a grand coiner of phrases as Mr. Churchill could

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not coin the "iron curtain"; he could only borrow it without acknowledgment from Goebbels. Everyone knows today the real aims that were behind those phrases: that, just as the attack on the "Communist peril" at home is always the advance barrage for the attack on all working class and democratic liberties, and finally on the liberal gentlemen themselves, so the big noises about the "Russian menace" and "Soviet aggression" are always the cover for aims of world domination (precisely because the Soviet Union is the main obstacle to such aims), and the aims of world domination are always the age-old aims of imperialism, never of socialism. Once bitten, twice shy. If we want to look for the menace to the freedom of the peoples today, it is always worth enquiring who has taken over the mantle of the Anti-Comintern Pact, who is talking most loudly about the "Red peril" and the "Russian menace," and to whom the same social elements in all countries that previously backed Hitler and fascism are looking for salvation today. There is unfortunately no doubt about the answer to that question.

Heirs of the Anti-Comintern Pact

When Hector McNeil, in his apologia for the British line-up with American aggressive policy, following Vishinsky's exposure, declared that

> "To sigh for a unity of Powers which fought against fascism was either nostalgic nonsense or dangerous dishonesty; they were not the same company of nations who fought, and when they parted with war, they parted with unity of purpose,"

he was indeed saying a terrible thing to blast the hopes for which millions gave their lives ("our nations shall work together in war and in the peace that will follow"—Teheran Declaration), but he was also expressing a kernel of the truth, so far as official policy is concerned. It is not the Soviet Union that has travelled away from Teheran, Crimea and Potsdam. There is no Molotov Doctrine claiming the right to send military missions to Mexico and Alaska in order to hem in the United States or demanding control over the Panama Canal. But there is a Truman Doctrine. There is no Vishinsky Doctrine declaring that any non-communist government anywhere in the world is a menace to Russian security. But there is an Acheson Doctrine declaring that any communist government anywhere in the world is a menace to American security. Travel to the Library of Congress to study the official Report on "Fascism in Action" and turn to the section on the Foreign Policy of Nazism:

> "The foreign policy of National Socialist Germany had several objectives, (1) to fight and eradicate the rival system of communism and as a corollary to check Russia everywhere."

Are we listening to an exposition of Nazi foreign policy or to the latest semi-official authoritative explanation by "Mr. X" of the State Department on the aims of American foreign policy?

Turn to the *New York Times* of August 24, 1947:

> "Nearly 100 German scientists, spurred on by the hopes of an

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ultimate revenge on Russia, are working untiringly at Wright and Patterson Army air fields to help the Army Air Forces plan the sky fleets of the future . . . Officers who have talked with them have received various answers as to why they volunteered to leave the Reich for this country. The underlying thought in almost all their minds, the officers report, is that by their efforts the Soviets will one day be defeated."

The Nazis seem to have an idea where to look for their revival.

Mr. Churchill and Fascism

In his gallant defence of Mr. Churchill, Leader of the Tory Party, that mortal enemy of Toryism, Mr. McNeil, declared that "Mr. Churchill's record of struggle against fascism compares with that of any member of the Communist Party anywhere in the world." Mr. McNeil is mistaken. Mr. Churchill was never an opponent of fascism. When he made his pilgrimage to Mussolini in 1927, he poured fulsome praise on the Dictator, and declared: " If I had been an Italian I am sure that I should have been wholeheartedly with you from start to finish in your triumphant struggle," and *The Times* (22.1.27) reported that " Mr. Churchill's parting message has elicited enthusiastic comments from all the fascist newspapers "; it was the Italian Communists who were giving their lives in the struggle against fascism. Of Hitler, Churchill wrote in 1937 how much he did " admire his patriotic achievement; if our country were defeated I hope we should find a champion as indomitable to restore our courage and lead us back to our place among the nations." When British Communists were giving their lives in Spain in the opening battles against fascism and against German-Italian aggression, Mr. Churchill publicly proclaimed himself " neutral " in this crucial first phase of the war against the Axis. Churchill fought Hitler Germany, not because he was against fascism, but because German imperialism threatened the interests of British imperialism. In the war alliance of the United Nations his outstanding record as a war leader coincided with the progressive interests of the world. But even there his imperialist outlook affected strategy, as over the delay of the second front (he was also privy to the plans in 1939-40 to develop the war front against the Soviet Union through Finland and Baku, as now fully revealed in the Swedish White Paper), and also affected war aims and post-war plans, where the whole strategy was directed to bleed and weaken Russia, while maintaining Anglo-American forces fresh and relatively unused in order to " garrison Europe," in Hoare's phrase, against the communist-led liberation movements. As soon as hostilities ended (and indeed before, as in Greece), this imperialist anti-democratic outlook came to the forefront, finding full expression in his Fulton speech, and making Churchill today the idol of all the Munichites, pro-fascists and Hitlerites. Hence Mr. McNeil's reference to " Mr. Churchill's record of struggle against fascism " is—to put it mildly—misleading as an apologia for the Labour Government's present identity of policy with Churchill.

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Who are the Warmongers?

In vain the *Economist* seeks to hold the scales even with nice impartiality:

> "Much is being said and written there (in the United States) which must read like 'warmongering' to any Russian official who has placed on his desk a daily digest or clippings from the American press. Digests of the Russian press and radio comment give exactly the same impression."

This is very simply not true. We are not speaking here of hard words or rough language. We are speaking of a perfectly precise and definite thing, i.e., "warmongering" or calls for war. We would challenge the *Economist* to produce a single extract from a single Soviet spokesman, high or low, or from the humblest provincial Soviet newspaper, demanding a preventive war against the United States or calling for bombs to be rained on the towns and villages of the United States. Yet the theme of a preventive war on the Soviet Union is the theme of whole books, lectures, discourses in a stream in the United States—and not from uninfluential quarters. Mr. Byrnes is hardly a minor American spokesman. Mr. Byrnes was Secretary of State in the critical decisive period of the deterioration of relations with the Soviet Union. Yet Mr. Byrnes in his book "Frankly Speaking" has coolly proposed that pledged conditions for treaty-making with Germany should be scrapped, and that independently of the United Nations the "United States and as many other nations as will join her must drive the Russians out by force" from Eastern Germany—which *The Times* has correctly characterised as a "simple recipe for war."

It is not a Soviet spokesman, but the principal representative of progressive democracy in the United States, Henry Wallace, the successor to Roosevelt's policies, who in a speech at Baltimore on October 15 publicly named the "war group in the United States" as led by Harriman, Secretary for Commerce, Forrestal, Secretary for Defence, and Lovett, Under-Secretary of State. And the implication of Churchill's broadcast to New York on October 14 was no less unmistakable:

> "There is no country in Europe which makes a firmer or more solid front against Soviet and Communist encroachment than Great Britain. There is no doubt whatever that the Government and the overwhelming mass of the British people at home and abroad throughout our Commonwealth, if any great issue should arise affecting human freedom, would act with the United States in the same solidarity and fraternal intimacy which have so lately given us victory against the combined dictatorships of Germany, Italy and Japan."

This is the basis on which Churchill pours his praises on Bevin and the Labour Cabinet. For these aims the workers are called on to sacrifice.

Aims of Domination

It is notorious that the noisy threats of war and ostentatious piling up of armaments and strategic preparations (it is the United States that has multiplied its war expenditure eleven times pre-war, and Britain four times, while the Soviet Union has brought its down to pre-

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war) do not necessarily mean the immediate or even near launching of war by an imperialist Power. These are means to terrify the nations into submission, alongside the carrot of dollars to reward submission.

The aims of imperialism are not primarily war, but domination, penetration, control. This is the menace which most directly threatens Western Europe today. The Marshall Plan was originally presented by its advocates as a generous gesture of aid. Today the unhappy sixteen nations are less sure. Listen to the *Economist's* rueful lament after five months' experience:

> "The present prospect is tragic . . . The European Governments will be prodded, lectured, urged and admonished on every aspect of their policy. Visiting Congressmen will not spare (or rather have not spared) their criticisms, and more than one has echoed Mr. John Taber in reference to Europe's laziness and lack of serious purpose. Moreover, guarantees will be laid down, or at least proposed—American oversight of the aid, American trustees, political modifications in governments, abandonment of socialisation—as preliminary conditions to the granting of any aid at all. But in Europe, in the ear of every European government, will re-echo Mr. Molotov's bitter jeers at their 'loss of national sovereignty' and the local communist clamour over 'dollar imperialism' . . . Who profits from this save the Communist Party?" (11.10.47).

Is there a single Minister or publicist who would dare to deny the extent to which American pressure is already deflecting British economic policy? Nor let us forget the end of the road designed for Britain—to become the aircraft carrier and "atom bomb absorber" for American imperialism. Is it not time to change the course before we have travelled further along this road?

Britain's Future

Hence the call of the Nine Parties Declaration is not least a call to the British people to save themselves and join the goodly company of democratic peoples who are determined not to submit to foreign domination or war manœuvres, and who will find the way to work out their economic salvation along the paths of mutual co-operation. There is no question of the spirit and will of the British. The Gallup poll on dollar aid already quoted has shown the will of the majority of the people, and especially of the supporters of the labour movement. Yet this majority voice runs completely contrary to the official policy of both Front Benches. Here is the crux of the political problem in Britain. The urgent task is to rally this majority of the labour movement and of the British people so as to compel a change of policy, to drive out the supporters and allies of Tory imperialism from the Cabinet, and establish a Government which will lead Britain in unity with the progressive democratic nations of Europe and the world, not only to solve the crisis of the economic situation at home, but to safeguard the national independence of Britain, banish the shadow of war and international discord which hangs over the world, and restore the basis of international democratic co-operation for peace.

October 20, 1947. R.P.D.

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DEMOCRATIC PLANNING IN THE SOVIET UNION

By WAL HANNINGTON

I HAD the pleasure of visiting the Soviet Union at the end of 1946 with an official delegation from the Amalgamated Engineering Union. We went as a goodwill mission and were the guests of the Russian Trade Unions. We were granted every facility to see everything that we desired, and of course most of this included visits to industrial establishments. The main areas in which we moved were Moscow, Leningrad, and the Donbas. The factories visited covered a very wide range of engineering, including general engineering, heavy machine building, surgical instrument making, electrical power establishments, motor car and lorry building, tool making, and steel works. We had many talks with factory Directors, representatives of the factory Trade Union Committees, and workers on the bench.

The first thing to understand about Soviet Industry is the entirely different relationship between management and workers from that which exists in capitalist countries. Industrial conflict in our own country arises from the fundamental class divisions within society. Generally speaking, the management side of an industrial establishment represents the private interests of the employing class, and this inevitably creates antagonism between the management and the workers. In the Soviet Union, however, where there is no private ownership of factories because they are all State-owned and belong to the Soviet people, there are no separate class interests for the management to serve. The result is a spirit of real team work between management and workers.

Trade Union membership is not compulsory in the Soviet Union, but only a very small percentage of workers remain unorganised.

In our country we seek to organise 100% trade unionism (sometimes resorting to strikes in order to achieve this), because we realise that the non-unionist constitutes a danger to the established conditions created by trade union effort. We realise that unscrupulous employers use the non-unionist to divide the ranks of the workers and to hold up improvements in working conditions. Therefore, by our drive for 100% trade unionism, we aim at depriving the employer of this weapon. But in the Soviet Union there is no private employing class to take advantage of non-unionists, and the non-unionist there does not constitute a danger to established conditions as he does in a capitalist country. Therefore, although the Soviet trade unions seek to achieve 100% organisation in every factory, they do so by propaganda and educational work instead of compulsion.

Every factory in the Soviet Union has its Trade Union Committee, and the large establishments (employing several thousands of workers) have a full-time organiser. One of the things which greatly impressed

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me was the power of the trade unions in Soviet industry. They are, in fact, the governing authority at the point of production.

There is a great enthusiasm amongst the Soviet workers for production. They do not fear over-production and consequent unemployment, such as we experienced in the years between the two wars, because all industrial development in the Soviet Union is planned, and the standard of living of the people is related to the industrial and technical advance which is made.

Let us look a little closer at the procedure in respect of the Soviet five year plans. The draft plan is first prepared by the experts on the State Planning Commission, in close consultation with the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. The Commission is appointed by the Government. The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions is a comparable body to our British T.U.C. After the over-all draft is prepared, it is then broken down into its industrial parts and submitted to the Executive Councils of all the Trade Unions and to the Ministries of the various industries. It then goes out to the Regional trade union Committees, the factory managements and the trade union Factory Committees. In every factory meetings of the workers are then called to discuss the plan and the part which their factory will play in achieving it. The draft plan is returned to the State Planning Commission and the Russian T.U.C., with the numerous criticisms and suggestions which have come from the factories. Careful study is devoted to these criticisms and suggestions, and on that basis the final plan is drawn up.

The result of this procedure is that the date for the commencement of the plan is heralded by the workers as the beginning of another great advance in the life of the Soviet people, and there are profound support and enthusiasm for the plan. The workers do not feel that this is something being imposed upon them from the top. They feel that it is their own plan—that by their discussions and the advancement of their ideas in every factory, they have helped to hammer out that plan.

Is this not in striking contrast to what we find in Britain today?

Our economic position calls for certain drastic measures to be taken, but these come to the workers in the form of orders from above. Practically no consultation has taken place with the workers in the factories. They do not understand why the Government orders are necessary, and the result is, instead of there being a spirit of resolve in support of the new measures, there is a very deep sense of frustration and disappointment among the workers arising from a feeling that they are the victims of new restrictions and exhortations for harder work without any definite prospects of improvement in their conditions.

In the Soviet Union, after the five year plan has been finalised, it is broken down into yearly plans, and in the factories into monthly plans. At fairly regular intervals the trade unions call production conferences of workers and management to check up, and if need be, revise their

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part of the general plan. These conferences, on the basis of practical experience in the operation of the plan, often decide to exceed the quota originally set for the particular factory. It is as a result of such decisions made by the workers themselves that the targets of the five year plans are actually completed in a shorter time than originally laid down.

The term " Socialist emulation " is frequently used in Soviet Industry. It refers to contests arranged between the workers of one factory and another. One factory challenges another to a contest in raising their output quota, and the rival results are chalked up on boards in the factories and published in the press. In all the factories which I visited whilst I was in Russia, I saw large notice boards containing these production charts.

I also saw displayed in each department photographs of " Stakhanovite " workers, those who have an outstanding record in production. They are honoured by the Soviet Government for their industrial services, and are often referred to as " Heroes of Labour." I talked to many "Stakhanovites": one thing which impressed me was that not only were they proud of their title, but that their fellow workers were very proud to claim that they had in their Department or Group a " Hero of Labour." The attitude of the ordinary workers towards a " Stakhanovite " was that of real respect and admiration as for one who was contributing a greater share than they were to the fulfilment of the plan and the advancement of the Soviet people. To win the title of " Stakhanovite " does not necessarily entail greater physical effort on the job. It is often a reward for initiative on the part of a worker who from his practical experience evolves a method for doing the job in a way which will greatly increase output.

Every encouragement is given to the Soviet workers to make proposals for improving the methods of work, and there is a constant flow of suggestions and inventions coming in from the workers for the consideration of the management and the factory committee. Moreover there is no danger of new inventions becoming the secret property of one firm with which it seeks to defeat its competitors. All new inventions are pooled and used as extensively as possible for the advancement of Soviet industry.

The Government and the Trade Unions encourage " Socialist emulation," and each month the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and the Executive Council of the appropriate union decide which factory has worked best. The best are rewarded with large bonus payments from the Government, which are shared from the Director down to the least important worker. The factory is also presented with an order known as " The Red Banner of Labour," while outstanding workers during the year receive a decoration known as " The Order of the Red Banner." In some of the factories I saw displayed in the Directors' offices the magnificent Banners of Labour, and the directors and workers alike shared in the pride of this achievement. I was informed at the headquarters of the Russian Trade

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Unions that each month approximately 3,000 factories, covering all industries, receive the Socialist Emulation bonus.

I was also greatly impressed with the class of work and the skill of the workers, having in mind how industrially backward Russia was prior to the 1917 revolution.

An outstanding feature noticeable amongst the Soviet people today is their zest for knowledge, their eagerness to become proficient, their enthusiasm in carrying out the job. This applies to men, women and youths. I saw many women in engineering factories engaged on skilled work. Women have an equal status with the men, nor is there any resentment on the part of the men to women in industry, because they have no fear of the women being used as cheap labour to undermine established conditions, such as is often done in our own country.

The system of apprenticeship training I thought was very thorough. Girls as well as boys attend the engineering apprentice schools, and I found them very keen students. By their system of trade training, they are creating in the Soviet Union a generation of craftsmen that will be equal to the best that can be found in the world. It sets an example to the world in the encouragement given to its youth, who have full opportunity to advance to the highest positions in the trades, professions, the sciences, the arts, and the State. Wealth and family connections play no part in deciding promotion. What counts is ability and intelligence, and service to the people.

I travelled through the devastated regions of the Ukraine, and, while appalled at the colossal destruction evident everywhere, I found the workers getting down to the job of rebuilding their country with a real spirit of determination. Today, unfortunately, so much of their effort has to be devoted to restoring the tremendous damage done to their country by the German Fascist invaders: but had it not been for the war, the progress which would have been made in the life of the Soviet people by the third and fourth five year plans would no doubt have been most astonishing for the rest of the world. Nevertheless, it was very inspiring to note, as I did everywhere, that the spirit of achievement on the part of the Soviet workers has not been weakened, but on the contrary—as I heard declared many times—they are determined to rebuild their towns and villages, their factories and farms, their schools and cultural institutions, on a grander scale than ever before.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY *will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into any correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.*

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CRIPPS AND THE ALTERNATIVE

By J. R. CAMPBELL

WITH the announcement of the new export targets by Sir Stafford Cripps in September, and with the subsequent pronouncements of Ministers on wages, prices and inflation, the charge that the Government is completely devoid of any policy can no longer be sustained. True the policy has been hastily improvised, but its various parts are more or less consistent with each other, and are serving as a basis for the everyday activity of the Government. The question is no longer has the Government a policy, but whom does this policy serve.

The nucleus of the policy is the export programme announced by Sir Stafford Cripps which the press promptly named the Cripps Plan, although it is no more a plan than is the fear-driven, headlong rush of a small child through the dark.

The previous export policy of the Government was based on the assumption that following the war there would be a gradual expansion of world trade in which Britain would share, so that by 1950 our exports would reach the target of 75 per cent. above pre-war. While we were building up our trade we would be able to live above our income by drawing on the U.S. loan.

The new policy which follows the virtual exhaustion of the loan aims at achieving its export targets much sooner. The volume of exports is to reach 60 per cent. above pre-war by the end of 1948. This vast expansion of exports is not to be achieved as part of a general world expansion of trade. It has to be achieved in spite of the contraction in world trade which is now taking place. Now if you attempt to force exports up to enormous heights in a falling market you will find your difficulties accumulating with every successive wave of exports. If you are to achieve your targets you will almost certainly have to lower your prices. In short, a fierce export drive in present conditions will sharply raise the question of export prices, a fact that Sir Stafford Cripps endeavours to face by arguing that we can lower export prices by increased efficiency and that cuts in wages in order to lower them "are absolutely the last resort." The Federation of British Industries and the British Employers' Confederation will not demur. They have always claimed that employers only resort to wage cuts as "absolutely the last resort." What may mildly astonish them is the idea of a Labour Minister admitting the possibility of wage cuts, as a remedy under any circumstances.

Further the new export policy not only menaces the wages of the worker as a producer, but it proposes to sharply cut down the supply of consumer goods that will be available to him. The old policy was based on an attempt to ensure certain minimum supplies to the home market. As production increased the additional supplies were divided

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between the home consumer and the export trade. Under the new dispensation the export market takes first pick of everything. The consumers get the residue—when there is one.

Mr. Morrison has sought to justify this procedure by declaring that the British worker is merely being asked to do what the Russian worker was asked to do, namely sacrifice a little now in order to secure for himself a brighter future. It is a pity that Mr. Morrison did not go into this further or he would have learned that the Russian workers denied themselves consumer goods in order to speed up the capital development of their country. The British worker is being asked to do with less consumer goods at the very moment when the capital development programme of the Government is being cut. This is one of the most serious aspects of the whole policy. During the war a whole series of enquiries (the best known of which were the Platt report on Cotton and the Reid report on Mining) demonstrated the technical backwardness of British industry as compared with its rivals. At that time there was an expressed resolve that after the war the State in co-operation with private industry would launch a great modernisation programme. So when the Economic Survey for 1947 was published last February it was generally criticised on the grounds that its target for re-equipment was hopelessly inadequate. Commentators vied with each other in pointing out that with six years backlog of deferred maintenance in many industries the Government was only promising that apart from housing "there would be at least 15 per cent. more capital equipment and maintenance work done in 1947 than was done in a normal pre-war year."

Now we know that there has to be a cut of £200,000,000 per annum in the capital development programme now being undertaken. If the capital development programme is running at the rate envisaged by the Government in February (and it may well be less) this means a cut of one-fifth in new investment, as distinct from maintenance. It is therefore probable that in 1948 we will be lucky if we are doing as much work on capital development and maintenance as we were doing in one of those miserable pre-war years when British industry was falling technically behind its rivals in other lands. This is not a policy of doing without consumer goods in order to live better tomorrow. It is a policy of doing without both consumer and capital goods in order to live worse tomorrow. Meantime the British engineering industry (which did re-equip itself to some extent during the war) will be working at full capacity to re-equip the industries of other lands, for in an effort to reach its target it will be exporting two-and-a-half times as much machinery as it did in 1938.

In short, we have a policy which leaves us with little hope for the future.

It is preposterous to talk of this policy as if it were a plan or even a prognosis. All that happened is that the Government statisticians roughly calculated what consumer goods might be exported without provoking a popular upheaval and what machinery could be exported

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without bringing British industry to a standstill; and drew up targets on that basis. As an exercise in statistical ingenuity it is interesting, but there is no plan in it. There are only the very vaguest ideas as to where the various types of goods can be sold and the repercussions on British economy of the sudden export of every conceivable type of capital goods have not been given ten minutes study. So don't be surprised if you find a lot of production hold-ups taking place, because particular machines or spare parts can no longer be obtained at home.

At this point the Government supporter begins to lose his temper and declare that the critics are only indulging in unconstructive quibbling. We must have food and raw materials next year and we have got to pay for them by export, he says, and wailing and lamentation are of no avail. Now no one disputes the necessity of paying for necessary imports with exports. But not all imports are really necessary. The maintenance of the armed forces overseas and other Government overseas expenditure is costing this country £175,000,000 in this financial year. Overseas expenditure in 1938 by contrast only cost £16,000,000. This £175,000,000 per annum or more than £14,500,000 per month is an invisible import to be paid for by exports. We are exporting not only to get food and materials but to maintain swollen armed forces overseas. The Government's critics dispute that necessity. They go further and ask why is it not possible to get sufficient men into industry to produce the necessary exports and provide for the needs of the home market as well. Before the war there were 990,000 men and women engaged in producing goods for export. Last July there were 1,518,000—a labour force which only needed a further 66,000 men to bring it to a level of 60 per cent. above 1938. Why in Heaven's name can't a labour force of almost 60 per cent. above pre-war produce the Government's target of a 60 per cent. increase in exports? Let us suppose that 300,000 of these men are producing capital goods that will not be available for export for some time—say ships or electrical generating plant, and that what we want is to increase the labour force on more quickly manufactured exports. Then it may be permissible to take another 300,000 into production for export from the ranks of those producing for the home market provided one replaces them by speedily demobilising an equivalent number from the forces. That is the issue that Sir Stafford Cripps never discusses. Why is it not possible to cut the forces so that sufficient men will be available to produce for home and export needs? This is the "A.B.C. of the Crisis" which the Labour Party's bright young publicists continue to obscure.

We can only obtain exports by denuding the home market because we propose up till next March to maintain well over 1,000,000 in the armed forces. On the basis of the cuts in imports and the great export drive the amount of commodities on the home market will shrink while wages, profits and interest remain the same. There is an inflationary gap which must be closed and the Government proposes to introduce an autumn Budget to close it by cutting the purchasing

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power of the people by higher indirect taxation or by reduced food subsidies. This brutal attack on working class standards has nothing to do with the necessity of balancing imports and exports. It has everything to do with the criminal and economically ruinous attempt on the part of a nation with a huge trading deficit to keep over 1,000,000 men under arms. Never in all history has a nation in a desperate financial situation engaged in such a desperate orgy of waste. So when Mr. Morrison tells his Smethwick audience not to listen to people who argue that we should do without such high exports he is indulging in cheap, nasty demagogy. What his critics are asserting is that we can do without such huge armed forces.

The export drive as such is a " drive into the blue " because it is not based upon an attempt to conclude stable trade agreements with the Soviet Union, the new Democracies, or for that matter the Colonial countries. The Labour Party publication, " A.B.C. of the Crisis," attempts to discount the amount of trade that can be done in this way by suggesting that the East European countries are devastated and poor. How easily reformists can change their arguments to suit circumstances. For months they have been arguing that the Soviet Union is preventing the recovery of Europe by refusing to permit trade between the East and West. When the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries express their willingness to trade, then the same "experts" turn around and declare that they are poor and devastated and haven't much to trade anyway.

Of course, every schoolboy knows that the Eastern European countries have not at this moment an export surplus of food and raw materials comparable to that of the U.S.A. But they have a surplus which the British Government by refusing to make a trade agreement with the Soviet Union has spurned. In any case the question is not how much resources is at present in existence but how Britain can co-operate with those countries in bringing into being new resources which may be available next year. Britain had the opportunity of obtaining some timber from the Soviet Union immediately and of providing the Soviet Union with equipment that would enable it to produce more timber for sale to Britain next year.

Could we not supply Yugoslavia with tractors and spare parts and enable it to have a bigger harvest than it would otherwise have, part of which would accrue to Britain? It need not be a simple exchange of British capital goods against East European raw materials. Could we not supply Czechoslovakia or Poland with wool or yarn to turn into textiles part of which would come to us in payment and could either be added to home stocks or could be used for export elsewhere? If we forgo such measures of mutual trade we will delay the coming into existence of alternative sources of supply to those of the U.S.A. and will hinder world recovery in consequence.

A real export drive must be based on increasing the number of reciprocal agreements with other countries so that we are able to build up a structure of planned trade.

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The Labour movement has always rejected the assumption that the free play of the market would ensure reasonable wages or security of employment. Yet its Labour Ministers in their export policy seem to believe that in the free play of the world market Britain will be able to get all the food and raw materials we need. It is time to reverse this policy. If we want security and a rising standard of life we must plan for both in our foreign trade and in our domestic policy. Only thus will we free ourselves from the dictation of the dollar.

RESHUFFLE TO THE RIGHT

By WILLIAM RUST

SINCE the fuel crisis of last February revealed the chronic diseases from which our economic and social system is suffering, Britain has been afflicted not so much by a Government crisis but by a crisis of government. An attempt has been made to resolve the former by the September-October reshuffle, but the latter continues as acute as ever.

The two primary aspects of this crisis of government are:

The resort to policies which will still further weaken Britain's economic position and increase her dependence on the United States.

The growing divergence between the Government and the people as revealed by the desire of the Labour masses for more radical measures on the one hand and the coming together of the Labour and Tory leaderships on the other.

The contrast between how Transport House is facing the future on the eve of the third session of Parliament and the rosy hopes which entranced the movement two years ago is well expressed in the summing up by Sir Stafford Cripps, the new Minister of Economic Affairs, that Britain is facing " economic strangulation " unless it gets immediate dollar aid.

Gone are the promises of uninterrupted social reform and of fifty triumphant years of Labour Government. All the cries now are for tighter belts and the by-election figures are being uneasily calculated. Gone also are the Bevin promises of the summer that harder work would get the country out of the grip of the " American moneylender"; the calls for harder work continue, but they are accompanied by the admissions of Woe-woe Cripps that even if the British people work their fingers to the bone the adverse dollar balance will still continue.

And there are few British workers, even the most devout, who will take consolation from Cripps' further warning that " competition for worldly benefits is essentially anti-Christian " and that we must beware of " increasing the power of the material and decreasing the influence of the spiritual."

This is the background to the Government reshuffle which

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brought forward Cripps as the new White Hope, turned Shinwell out of the Cabinet, and resulted in a kind of a "managerial revolution" which gave high office to several experts whose brilliance at university examinations is no compensation for their somewhat frail connections with the Labour Movement.

These were not the kind of changes that the Labour Movement had been looking forward to during those weary months when Government re-organisation was under discussion. On the contrary the movement appeared to be rather stunned by the outcome. Not so the Tories. To keep up the political game the court jesters of Fleet Street bang their bladders as hard as ever (the editors of the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Herald* are constantly engaged in gentlemanly controversy), but Churchill was careful to single out both Bevin and Cripps for special approbation.

The appointment of Cripps, the dropping of steel nationalisation, the opening of the drive against the living standards of the people and the obsequiousness displayed by McNeil to Marshall at U.N.O. seem to have satisfied both the Tory leaders and the American millionaires that the Labour Government is now, after many delays and uncertainties, completely turning its back on its election programme and can therefore be safely used as their instrument of policy.

This view of important ruling circles in Britain is frankly expressed by the *Economist* in an editorial article declaring that the Labour Government should remain in office:—

> "A coalition would merely be a dilution of responsibility and would still further diminish and retard the Government's power of decision. A General Election, followed by a Conservative Government, would be resented as a repetition of the trick of 1931 and would be used by the Labour Party ever afterwards as an all-embracing alibi . . . the present Government are slowly being forced into doing the only thing that a Conservative Government could do at once—that is, initiate a sharp bout of disinflation. And while the advantages of a change are problematical, there is one great advantage to be derived from the Labour Party remaining in office. If they go on as they have been going, they will be soundly beaten at the next election. But that will not finish the Labour Party; it will continue to govern the country, in alternation with the Conservatives, for a long time to come. That being so . . . the more ideological delusions it is compelled to abandon the better for everybody. All things considered, it is best that the education of the Labour Party should continue." (October 18, 1947).

But sad to say these City gentlemen are counting their chickens before they are hatched. They have left out of account the views and aspirations of the Labour Movement, which are something quite different to the policies now being pursued by such Right-wing leaders as Bevin, Cripps, Attlee and Morrison. They have left out of account the economic consequences to Britain of the policy of subservience to American imperialism which is seeking to bring about the political and economic enslavement of Europe and is ruthlessly pushing forward its war plans.

The *Economist* does not want a repetition of 1931, and from a

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different point of view, neither does the working class. It has learned a great deal since then and is in a stronger position to fight. Indeed, 1947 is not 1931, except in the sense that the Tories have learned nothing and forgotten nothing and that the Ramsay MacDonalds of today are just as willing to obey the capitalists as were their prototypes.

But profound changes have taken place in the Labour Movement, as a result of the experience of the inter-war years and the war itself. Despite the confusion and sharp differences which still exist in the movement there is a bitter determination not to go back to the days of mass unemployment and the means test, there is a better understanding of the nature of the economic measures which must be taken to fight the crisis, a stronger Socialist consciousness and a firmer belief in the power of the working class.

If the Government has been going round in circles during the last six months it is not so much that it lacked the will to embrace the Tory-F.B.I. solutions which they now unashamedly proclaim but that they feared the opposition of the masses and were manœuvring for position in order to make the attack.

But it is of the utmost importance to note that the ideological barrage which is preceding the assault has already met with a sharp resistance. The trade unions are not willing to accept the arguments for the freezing of wages or the principle that wage increases must be preceded by increased production. Moreover, there is growing alarm at the evidence that the Government intends to attack *real* wages by the indirect method of raising prices—the abolition or reduction of food subsidies, increases in the purchase tax, and the addition of any new taxes that the ingenuity of the Treasury can devise.

The trial of strength between the people and the reactionary alliance of the Tories, F.B.I., and Right-wing Labour leaders is now opening out. On the results of that fight depends Britain's future.

And this internal British fight against what the Tories are pleased to call " a sharp bout of disinflation " and " underemployment " is one of the most important sectors of the international front, of the world fight against economic catastrophe and the war plans of American imperialism so clearly revealed in the Byrnes proposal.

In taking up the challenge thrown down by the Tory-F.B.I.-Transport House alliance, the British workers are not merely taking up a negative stand in resistance to attempts to depress their standard of living. They are joining those positive, living forces represented in their millions at the Warsaw conference of the nine leading European Communist parties, which are seeking to strengthen democracy, to destroy the plans of the warmongers and to carry through measures of social advance on the basis of planned economy.

LABOUR MONTHLY GUARANTEE FUND

The list of donations, due to be printed this month, has been postponed till the next issue.

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SIDNEY WEBB, 1859-1947

By R. PALME DUTT

THE Labour Monthly joins in paying tribute to the memory of Sidney Webb as one of the honoured names of the British Labour Movement.

Sidney Webb was not a Marxist. He was during the greater part of his career one of the main inspirers and theorists of the anti-Marxist trend in the European Labour Movement. He was the Father of modern Reformism. Yet his patient and tireless labours of encyclopædic scholarship in the service of the labour movement, and the sincere evolution of his thought, in face of the fiasco of reformist illusions, to the final culminating stage when he devoted his declining years to the propagation of the ideas and achievement of Soviet Communism, have won him an honoured place which Marxists will readily accord him. The life and development of thought of Sidney Webb, from the grand opponent of Marxism to the grand propagandist of Soviet Communism, is of classic significance in the history of modern socialism.

Developing from his early training in the Colonial Office, with close associations with imperialist circles, especially with the Liberal Imperialist group of Haldane and others, and also with Balfour and Chamberlain, he had originally begun his political activity as an opponent of Marxism, and sought to found a school of Socialism—the so-called "British School of Socialism" or Fabianism—based on imperialism, the achievement of social reform legislation within the imperialist framework and permeation of the governing class. Bernstein learned from Webb during his stay in London the ideas that he embodied in Revisionism, which led the reformist offensive against Marxism during the first decade of the twentieth century, and which was combated and finally routed by Lenin and Bolshevism, first on the theoretical field, and eventually in practice.

But Webb was at the same time a courageous, untiring, sincere and objective researcher and thinker, even if in the traditional British empirical fashion, which recognises facts only after they are well above the surface, and distrusts any search into the laws of social development. He was untrammelled by the religious and sentimental prejudices which cast such a fog over most of the productions of the "British School of Socialism." He had a contempt for woolly thinking; he had a profound respect for facts. His works on the History of Trade Unionism, on the Co-operative Movement, on Local Government and a score of questions associated with the development of British institutions and social conditions remain classics of the labour movement, irrespective of ideological colour. In political activity his tactical skill, ingenuity and resource, especially in "behind the scenes" work, unrivalled since Francis Place, facilitated the adoption of many

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measures of social legislation which, despite bureaucratic limitations, brought reforms of value to the working class.

The latent conflict between these two trends in Webb—the initial imperialist anti-Marxist basis and the method of the truth-seeking social scientist anxious to fulfil the Benthamite principle of the greatest good of the greatest number—resulted in the strange drama or ironic parable underlying the seemingly placid tenour of Webb's life, which became by its final epilogue a demonstration of the bankruptcy of anti-Marxism and a vindication of Marxism or Communism. Webb, who had begun by demanding that Socialism must conform to " the Union Jack and the Ten Commandments," ended by turning aside his interest increasingly from Britain, where he saw little prospect of development in the immediate future, and recognising that the successful path to socialism had been achieved by Soviet Communism, representing the civilisation of the future.

The life of Webb falls into three main periods. The first period during the three decades up to the war of 1914 represented the heyday of Fabianism, corresponding to the growth and flourishing of imperialism before the crash. Webb espoused the now threadbare capitalist economics of Jevons against Marx; he supported the Boer War; he collaborated with Balfour in the preparation of the Education Act; he was the main purveyor of ideas for the social legislation of the Liberal Cabinet of 1906-14; he led the Progressives in the London County Council; he strove to achieve the abolition of poverty through the reform of the poor law; and he founded the London School of Economics, which has now become the centre of teaching of Hayek and his anti-socialist school. Distrustful of independent working class activity, during this period he played little active part in the Labour Party, and conducted his political activity primarily through close contact with leaders of the capitalist parties and the civil service.

The war of 1914 delivered the first shock to the premisses of Fabianism. The 1919 Preface to " Fabian Essays " frankly recognised the " general shortcoming " of the old Fabian outlook in the "failure to think internationally." Webb now turned to leading activity in the Labour Party, entering on its Executive and preparing the new Constitution, with the recognition of the aim of socialism, which was adopted in 1918. Under the impact of the general crisis of capitalism, Webb wrote for the first time a book on capitalism, " The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation," in 1923, which recognised that the rule of the capitalists was a " class dictatorship," and gave the first intimation that the path of reformism might prove a failure. (" We thought, perhaps wrongly . . . In an attempt, possibly vain.") But he still preached, as Chairman of the Labour Party in 1923, the " inevitability of gradualness," and held out the prospect, on the basis of an arithmetical calculation, of an absolute Labour majority by 1926. In fact, 1926 brought the General Strike.

The next great landmark, opening the final period, followed the world economic crisis and the Labour Government of 1929-31, in

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which Webb, now Lord Passfield, was Minister for the Colonies. Webb witnessed the bankruptcy of MacDonald. The disillusionment was deep. Henceforth Webb turned aside from active participation in British Labour politics, and devoted his final years to the study of Soviet Communism. In 1935 he published (in conjunction with his wife, Beatrice Webb, with whom since their marriage in 1892 a close partnership of co-operation in all political activity, research and the production of many books was maintained for a half a century to her death in 1943) the monumental work "Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?" In subsequent editions the query was removed. The publication of this work brought forth a torrent of angry protest from *The Times, Daily Herald* and all representatives of capitalist and official Labour opinion.

Webb devoted his declining years to the propagation of the principles and achievement of Soviet Communism. On the problems of the British Labour Movement he maintained in general a severe silence in public. In 1937 he published an article (*Tribune* 15.1.37) advocating that members of the Communist Party should be freely admitted as members of the Labour Party, and warning the Labour Party against the dangers of reformism:

"When, for instance, we criticise and denounce the Family Means Test in the provision for the unemployed, and the failure to provide complete, healthy nutrition for all the family, we must not omit or obscure the lesson that, so long as capitalism endures, there will always be mass unemployment and widespread malnutrition, neither of which can be prevented without sweeping away the capitalist system itself."

It is significant that the memoirs of Webb in the press have tried to hush up or even completely suppress this culminating phase, which provides the comment on all that went before. The *Daily Herald,* in a three-column memoir, completely omits mention of "Soviet Communism." As with so many figures of the labour movement, official idolatry will endeavour to shape the record so as to make of Webb an effigy suitable to the purposes of Transport House. But truth will out. The working class movement will honour the memory of Webb, not for his mistakes, but for his sincere and selfless service to truth as he saw it and to the cause of the liberation of the working people, and above all for the courage of the Great Epilogue with which he crowned his career.

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THE NINE-PARTY CONFERENCE*

Resolution on the Exchange of Experience and Co-ordination of the Activity of the Parties Represented at the Conference.

The Conference puts on record that the absence of connection among the Communist Parties taking part in this Conference represents a serious shortcoming in the present circumstances. Experience has shown that such a lack of co-ordination among the Communist Parties is incorrect and harmful. The necessity of exchange of experience and voluntary co-ordination of actions by the various Parties has become particularly pressing at present under conditions of an aggravation in the post-war international situation, when the lack of co-ordination of the Communist Parties could harm the working class.

In view of the above-mentioned the participants of the Conference agreed on the following:

1. To set up an Information Bureau from the representatives of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communist), the Communist Party of Rumania, the Hungarian Communist Party, the Polish Workers' Party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), the Communist Party of France, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and the Communist Party of Italy.
2. The Information Bureau is to be entrusted with the task of organising the exchange of experience, and, if necessary, with the task of co-ordinating the activities of the Communist Parties on the basis of mutual agreement.
3. The Information Bureau is to be composed of representatives of the Central Committees of the Parties, two members from each; delegates to be appointed and replaced by the Central Committees.
4. The Information Bureau is to have a fortnightly press organ and later on a weekly one. The press organ should be published in French and Russian, and, if possible, in other languages.
5. The Information Bureau is to have its offices in Belgrade.

Declaration of the Conference on the International Situation.

As a result of the Second World War and in the post-war period, substantial changes have occurred in the international situation. These changes are characterised by a new distribution of the basic political forces acting in the international arena, by changed relations between the victor-States in the Second World War and by their re-grouping.

While the war was on, the States allied in the war against Germany and Japan marched together and constituted one camp. During the war, however, differences in the allied camp existed both in the determination of war aims and the tasks of the post-war organisation of the world.

The Soviet Union and the democratic countries considered as the basic war aims: the restoration and consolidation of the democratic order in Europe, the elimination of Fascism and prevention of the possibility of a new aggression on the part of Germany, and establishing of close and durable co-operation among European nations.

The United States and, in agreement with her, Britain had other war aims: getting rid of market competitors (Germany and Japan), and consolidating their dominant position.

The difference in the determination of war aims and the tasks of post-war settlement became more marked in the post-war period.

Two opposite political lines took shape: at one extreme the policy of the U.S.S.R. and the democratic countries, aimed at disrupting imperialism and consolidating democracy; at the other extreme the policy

*An Information Conference took place in Poland at the end of September with the participation of the following Party representatives:
Yugoslav Communist Party: Kardelj and Djilas.
Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communist): Chervenkoff and Poptomoff.
Rumanian Communist Party: Dej and Pauker.
Hungarian Communist Party: Farkas and Revai.
Polish Workers' Party: Gomulka and Minc.
Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Zhdanov and Malenkov.
French Communist Party: Duclos and Fashon.
Czechoslovak Communist Party: Slanski and Basztovanski.
Italian Communist Party: Longo and Reale.

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of the U.S.A. and Britain, aimed at strengthening imperialism and strangling democracy

Since the U.S.S.R. and countries of new democracy have become a hindrance to the realisation of the imperialist plans of struggle for world domination and the rout of democratic movements, a campaign was proclaimed against the U.S.S.R. and countries of new democracy, reinforced by threats of a new war on the part of the most zealous imperialist politicians in the U.S.A. and Britain.

Thus two camps came into being, the imperialist anti-democratic camp with the basic aim of establishing world domination of American imperialism and routing democracy, and the anti-imperialist democratic camp with the basic aim of disrupting imperialism, strengthening democracy and eliminating the remnants of Fascism.

The struggle between the two opposing camps—the imperialist and anti-imperialist—is taking place in circumstances of further aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism, the weakening of the capitalist forces and the strengthening of the forces of Socialism and democracy.

Therefore the imperialistic camp and its leading force, the U.S.A., is displaying a particularly aggressive activity. This activity is being unfolded simultaneously in all directions —in the direction of military-strategic measures, economic expansion and ideological struggle. The Truman-Marshall plan is only a component part, the European section of the general plan of world expansionist policy, which is being carried out by the U.S.A. in all parts of the world, partly by means of a European section of the general plan of the world expansionist policy carried out by the U.S.A. in all parts of the world.

The plan for the economic and political enslavement of Europe by American imperialism is being complemented by the plans for the economic and political enslavement of China, Indonesia and the South-American countries.

Yesterday's aggressors—the capitalist magnates of Germany and Japan —are being prepared by the United States for a new role, that of becoming a weapon of the U.S. imperialist policy in Europe and Asia.

The stock of tactical methods used by the imperialist camp is most varied. Here we find a combination of direct threats of force, blackmail, extortion, various measures of political and economic pressure, bribery and utilisation of internal contradictions and strife, used for strengthening its positions. All this is being covered up by a Liberal-pacifist mask, calculated to deceive and catch people inexperienced in politics.

A special place in the stock of tactical methods of the imperialists is assigned to the utilisation of the treacherous policy of Right-wing Socialists of the type of Blum in France, Attlee and Bevin in England, Schumacher in Germany, Renner and Schaerf in Austria, Saragat in Italy, etc., who are striving to conceal the true predatory essence of the imperialist policy under the mask of democracy and Socialist phraseology but who in fact remain in all respects loyal supporters of the imperialists, bringing disintegration into the ranks of the working class and poisoning their outlook.

It is not accidental that the foreign policy of British imperialism found in the person of Bevin its most consistent and zealous executor.

Under these conditions it is essential for the anti-imperialist democratic camp to unite, work out a co-ordinated programme of actions and evolve its own tactics against the main forces of the imperialist camp, against American imperialism and its British and French allies and against Right-wing Socialists, in the first place in Britain and France.

The efforts of all the democratic, anti-imperialist forces of Europe are needed to disrupt the plan of imperialist aggression.

Right-wing Socialists are traitors to this cause. With the exception of those countries of new democracy where the bloc of Communist and Socialist with other democratic progressive parties constitutes the basis

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of resistance of these countries against the imperialist plans, Socialists in the majority of other countries, and in the first place the French Socialists and British Labourites — Ramadier, Blum, Attlee and Bevin—are facilitating by their grovelling and servility the task of American capital, provoking its exactions and pushing their own countries onto the road of vassal dependence on the United States.

This means that the Communist Parties are faced by a special task. They must take into their hands the banner of the defence of the national independence and sovereignty of their own countries. If the Communist Parties stand firmly on their positions, if they do not let themselves be intimidated and blackmailed, if they stand courageously on guard for democracy, national sovereignty, freedom and independence of their countries, if they are able in their struggle against the attempts at economic and political enslavement of their countries to stand at the head of all forces that are prepared to uphold the cause of honour and national independence, then no plans whatsoever for enslaving the countries of Europe and Asia can be carried out. This constitutes at present one of the basic tasks of the Communist Parties.

It is essential to bear in mind that there is a vast gap between the desire of the imperialists to unleash a new war and the possibility of organising such a war.

The people of the world do not want war. The forces championing peace are so considerable and large that if these forces remain staunch and firm in the cause of defending peace, if they display endurance and firmness, the aggressors' plans will suffer a complete fiasco.

It should not be forgotten that the hue and cry of imperialist agents around the war danger is aimed at intimidating those with weak nerves and the vacillating in order to obtain concessions for the aggressor by means of blackmail.

The chief danger for the working class now consists in under-estimation of its own forces and in over-estimation of the forces of the imperialist camp. Just as the Munich policy in the past gave a free hand to Hitlerite aggression, so now concessions to the new trend of policy of the U.S.A. and the imperialist camp can only make its instigators still more impudent and aggressive.

Therefore the Communist Parties must head the resistance to the plans of imperialist expansion and aggression in all respects—State, political, economic and ideological. They must rally and unite their efforts on the basis of a common anti-imperialist democratic programme and gather around them all the democratic and patriotic forces of the people.

Book Review

Stalin's Writings

J. V. Stalin Sochineniya, Vol. I, 1901-07 (Collected Works. Russian Edition).

Since 1946 the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute has begun to publish a complete edition of the works of Stalin. Sixteen volumes will cover the whole literary and theoretical activity from his first appearance in the Georgian working-class movement to his role as the great leader of his people and all progressive mankind in the war against Fascism. We hope that an English edition will soon make accessible this wealth of political and theoretical thought to the reading public in this country, and particularly to the Labour movement.

A glance into the first volume, covering the period from 1901-07, when Stalin worked as the organiser and leader of the Bolshevik organisation in Georgia (the articles in this volume were originally written in the Georgian language) shows that Stalin never was a merely practical organiser of the type prevailing in the Western parties. A true disciple of Lenin, he understood the unity of theory and practice. A considerable part of these

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early writings is devoted to what is mostly regarded as "pure" theory, the fundamentals of Marxism.

In a Preface written in January, 1946, the author stresses the point that at that time the elaboration of the ideology and policy of Leninism was not yet finished, and he calls his younger self (he was then 22-28) "a young Marxist who had not yet formed himself into an accomplished Marxist-Leninist." Stalin mentions two questions in which at that time he still paid tribute to the old Marxist conceptions and which were later clarified by Lenin: the agrarian question and the question of the conditions for the victory of Socialism.

Stalin with other Bolshevik delegates to the Fourth Party Congress (1906) opposed to Lenin's agrarian programme of land nationalisation a programme of dividing the land among the peasants as private property. One of the main arguments for this solution was that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia would result in a bourgeois Government and it would not be advisable to enhance the power of this Government too much by land nationalisation. Lenin was not afraid of strengthening the hands of a provisional revolutionary Government, even if it would not be a Socialist Government; he had the clear perspective of a rapid transition from the bourgeois-democratic to the Socialist revolution.

Commenting on this old controversy, Stalin says with characteristic modesty and self-criticism: "We practical Bolsheviks knew that Lenin at that time had the point of view of the bourgeois revolution in Russia passing over into the Socialist revolution . . . But we practicians did not penetrate into this matter and did not understand its great importance on account of our insufficient theoretical equipment, and also on account of the carelessness towards theoretical questions peculiar to practicians." Well, a Bolshevik "practician," leading an illegal organisation under the iron heel of Tsarism in the stormy years of the first Russian Revolution, found time not only to write numerous articles on all aspects of policy and tactics, but also on the theoretical basis of Marxism, on Dialectical and Historical Materialism.

The second self-critical remark refers to the old Social Democratic idea that Socialism cannot be established before the working class has become the majority of the population. This thesis recurs in Stalin's polemics against anarchism. Lenin's theory of the uneven development of capitalism under the conditions of imperialism had done away with this dogma and proved that a Socialist revolution can be victorious in a backward country with a numerically weak working class if this country happens to be a weak link in the chain of imperialism.

We find in this volume polemic articles defending and explaining Bolshevik policy and tactics against the Mensheviks, appeals and manifestoes breathing the fire of the great Revolution of 1905, a very interesting article on the national question (1904), and a great theoretical exposition of the fundamentals of Marxism "Anarchism or Socialism?" The historical background, a description of the conditions in Transcaucasia at that time and of Stalin's leading part in the creation of a Bolshevik workers' movement there, is to be found in L. Beria's lecture "On the History of the Bolshevik Organisation in Transcaucasia" (published by Lawrence & Wishart).

No one else understood so deeply and interpreted so clearly and originally the basic ideas of Lenin as Stalin did. Lenin himself highly appreciated the way in which Stalin developed and explained the thesis of Lenin's "What is to be Done?", that Socialist consciousness does not develop spontaneously out of the working-class movement, but has to be brought to the proletariat "from without." This idea was criticised by Plekhanov and other Mensheviks as a deviation to idealism and as an over-estimation of the part of intellectuals in the Labour movement. Stalin answered these critics in a letter from Kutais (where

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he expresses his admiration for Lenin: "a true mountain eagle") and in a pamphlet on Party disagreements. This is not an abstract theoretical problem, it is the eminently important problem of the part the Marxist Party has to play in the struggle for Socialism.

It is obvious, Stalin says, that the Socialist ideology could not arise before the material conditions for it had developed. In the working class there is an instinctive leaning to Socialist ideas, but the workers are even more strongly influenced by the dominating bourgeois ideologies; the elementary, spontaneous movement will necessarily fall under the influence of bourgeois ideas unless the steady fight of the organised vanguard, the Marxist Party, carries the Socialist ideas into the movement. "What is Scientific Socialism without the Labour movement?" Stalin asks, and he answers: "A compass which is lying unused and may only rust and would have to be thrown overboard. What is a Labour movement without Socialism? A ship without a compass, which even so will land on the other shore; but with a compass it would reach the shore much more rapidly and with less danger. . . It is the duty of the Social Democratic Party (and not only of the Social Democratic intelligentsia) to unite Socialism with the workers' movement, to bring Socialist consciousness into the movement, and so to give a Social Democratic character to the Labour movement."*

Twenty-three years later, returning to this problem of the role of Socialist consciousness in the "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," Stalin stressed the essential importance of Socialist consciousness with even greater emphasis: "New social ideas and theories arise precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is *impossible* (Stalin's italics) to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their

*It has to be remembered that at that time Marxist parties, including the Russian party, called themselves Social-Democratic.

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organising, mobilising and transforming action." It is evident that this makes a very important modification of the previous formulation of "a ship without a compass, which even so will land . . ."

This is a grave problem for countries like the U.S.A., where the amalgamation of Socialism and the Labour movement has still to develop, and like Britain, where the development is only in its initial stages.

The article on the national question (1904) contains in embryonic form some of the ideas, later developed in the famous pamphlet "Marxism and the National Question" (1913). It bases the analysis squarely on the class content of the national question under varying conditions. Taking the example of Georgia, Stalin shows how the aspects of this problem vary when the bourgeoisie replaces the feudal nobility and again when the working class emerges.

The great polemical work "Anarchism or Socialism?" (1906-7), part of which was lost when the Tsarist police arrested the author, gives an excellent exposition of the basic ideas of Dialectical and Historical Materialism. A clear light is thrown on the political implications of philosophical theories and on the application of the dialectical method to the problems of revolutionary praxis. It seems that the splendid outline of Marxist philosophy in Chapter 4 of the "Short Course" is to a great extent based on this earlier work of Stalin.

However much Stalin has grown in stature since the beginning of his life-work, reflected in this first volume, it shows the same mark of genius as his more mature works: clarity and simplicity, hard-hitting, uncompromising polemics, indomitable fighting spirit and the consistent link-up of the issues of the day with the final aims of the Socialist movement.

J. WINTERNITZ.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

LETTER TO MARX FROM ENGELS

[*The Congress of the Communist League in London in June*, 1847, *decided that a "confession of faith" should be discussed at the second congress, which began in London on 29th November*, 1847. *In place of a draft put before the local sections, Engels had worked out a communist catechism, and, in a letter telling Marx about this, the following passage occurs where a "manifesto" is suggested.*—ED. L.M.]

Just think over the Confession of Faith a little. I think we shall do it best if we drop the form of catechism and call the thing the Communist Manifesto. Since there must be a certain amount of historical narrative in it the form hitherto used does not suit in the least. I am bringing the stuff from here which I have done with me, it is merely narrative, it is wretchedly drafted and at a frightful speed. I begin with: What is Communism? and then go straight on to the history of the birth of the proletariat, the difference from earlier workers, the development of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, crisis and conclusions. And in it all every kind of incidental and finally the party politics of the communists so far as it is of interest to the public. The stuff here has not yet been fully brought forward for adoption, but I think I shall be able to carry it through save for a few quite small details in such a way that at any rate there will be nothing in it that is contrary to our views.

Engels to Marx in Brussels (*Paris, November* 23-24, 1847).

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